LEARNING AND GROWING; SAFE IN GOD'S LOVE

Birchington CE Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026 – 2027

Agreed by the FGB in September 2026
Date to be reviewed: September 2027

The name and contact details of the Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance and individual support for attendance in our school is:
Name: Mrs Louise Wilson (Headteacher)
Email address or contact details via business.manager@birchington.kent.sch.uk 01843 841 046

The name and contact details of the school staff member parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:
Name: Mrs A Searle, Attendance Officer
Email address or contact details angela.searle@birchington.kent.sch.uk 01843 841 046

Introduction and Background

Our approach to maintaining high attendance rates for our children is bound up within the words of our Birchington CE Primary School's Christian vision. Our school is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils and regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful, "flourish and feel safe", benefit from the opportunities presented to them and have a "hopeful future".

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and staff in partnership with parents and carers have a duty to promote full attendance at Birchington CE Primary School.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence from the school.

It is important to monitor attendance and punctuality carefully and take action to ensure safeguarding risks for children absent or missing from school. Those staff supporting attendance work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and DSL team.

The DfE has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance (updated on 19th August 2024). Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

It has been developed in consultation with school governors and staff, teachers, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless a child is ill or there are exceptional circumstances. It is the Headteacher not the parent or carer, who can authorise this absence.**

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR **175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments**				
190 **SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR** 190 days for your child's education	**5 days absence over a school year**	**10 days absence over a school year**	**19 days absence over a school year**	**More than 19 days absence over a school year**
100%	97%	95%	90% **Below 90% = persistent absentee**	Less than 90% **Below 50% =** **Severely Absent**
Good **Best chance of success.** **Gets your child off to a flying start.**		**Worrying** **Less chance of success.** **Makes it harder to make progress.**		**Serious Concern** **Not fair on your child.** **Possible court action.**

<u>Promoting Regular Attendance</u>

At Birchington CE Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central

part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers information regarding attendance on our newsletters/website
- Find ways to support parents to improve their child's attendance using a 'support first approach' with schools working together with local authorities and wider partners, including the voluntary and community sector where needed
- Invite families into school to attend a support meeting with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Welfare Team.
- Conduct home visits to check in on a family and offer support
- Celebrate excellent attendance by reporting attendance achievements on a weekly basis and on our newsletters, website and social media page.
- Reward good or improving attendance
- Report to parents/carers on their child's attendance by their annual school report and at Parent Consultation Evenings.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance and to celebrate rises in attendance levels

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular or sporadic absence can seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines for other children and cause your own child anxiety. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is **always** required. Each half-day is known as one 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U' code on the register. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session because they were late when the register was taken.
- Shopping trips or purchasing clothing or shoes
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents/carers to medical appointments
- Their own or family members birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional circumstances' by the Headteacher - may result in school applying to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the Local Authority
- Day trips
- Illness of a parent
- Visits to family abroad when exceptional circumstances are not agreed by the Headteacher
- Surprise trips or trips booked without knowledge
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed
- Illness reported immediately before and/or after a planned leave of absence with no medical evidence provided

Persistent and Severe Absenteeism (PA)

Persistent absence is defined by the Government where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and **severe absence** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance because absence at this level can cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to resolve this.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (and only as a last resort).

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Mrs A Searle (Attendance Secretary)
Email address or contact details: angela.searle@birchington.kent.sch.uk 01843 841 046

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the **first day** of absence **before 9.00 am**. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to a member of the office staff
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, **again before 9.00 am**
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. **However, it is your responsibility to contact us.**
- If we are unable to contact parents/carers by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and an unannounced home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding and wellbeing.
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be classed as 'missing from education' and a CME or Child Missing in Education form will be completed and submitted to the Local Authority.

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance or punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and member of the Welfare Team
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate – this might include Early Help or the Family Hub.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Birchington CE Primary School are:

The school day starts at 8.50 am and ends at 3.20pm for all year groups.

Gates are open for all children from 8.30am.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.50am when children must be in class. This is when the register is taken. Your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time.
- Children arriving after 8.50am are required to come into school via the school office. Parents/carers must sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded.
- At 9.00am the registers will be closed. In accordance with Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Welfare Team, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Being late for school has many negative consequences:

- Gets the day off to a bad start;

- Increases stress and upset for the child;
- Can lead to the child feeling embarrassed;
- Affects the child's overall confidence;
- Disrupts the learning of other class members;
- Creates bad habits which could lead to poor attendance;
- Confusion for your child as work or activities might have been started

Please don't be late through the gate!

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers, and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, or we can complete a request for support. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a meeting to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised Early Help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have Special Educational Needs, or disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain. However, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/carers should contact for more detailed support on attendance:

Name: Angela Searle (Attendance Officer)
angela.searle@birchington.kent.sch.uk
OR

Name **Sarah Cooper (Parent Support Advisor)**
Email address or contact details via flo@birchington.kent.sch.uk **01843 841 046**

The school can offer bespoke support with attendance so please speak to Sarah as soon as you begin to have issues. Parents/carers will be encouraged to meet regularly with staff to agree attendance contracts and/or strategies for support and review the outcomes after a fixed period of time.

Local Authority Attendance Support Services

Local Authority Attendance specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to work with the school and Local Authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents/carers should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

School Attendance and the Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/carers may be recognised differently under education law than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice. The power of issuing a Penalty Notice provides an alternative to the prosecution of parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and enables parents to discharge the potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them) can submit a penalty notice for the unauthorised absence of a child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Once a penalty notice is submitted by the school, the Local Authority or the police can then proceed to issue a fine to parents/carers. It is important to note that once a school submits a penalty notice application to the

Local Authority, details of the fine and subsequent payment is managed and owned by the Local Authority and not the school. The school does not receive any payments or funds from a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 per absent child within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

See the Kent Code of Conduct for more information

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or her designate, acting on behalf of the Governing Board, (not the Local Authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the school. Each case will be judged on its own merits. We strongly encourage parents/carers to have a conversation with the Headteacher as soon as they are aware that leave may be requested. The school may request evidence from a family if they feel that the leave would be qualify as being in exceptional circumstances. Where a parent/carer removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Kent Code of Conduct. The Headteacher's decision is final and leave may not be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- A family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness.
- The funeral of an immediate family member.
- Children of service personnel.
- One day of absence could be authorised for the wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence (not abroad).
- One-off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence.
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer).

If a child is suffering with mental health issues, the school will support them in the best way possible with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying mental health issue. In instances of long-term or repeated absences due to mental health issues, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them attend school more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to

prevent the child from attending for extended periods. If a parent proactively seeks a note from a GP, for example, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a child's best interest, a plan to help a child to attend school may involve the use of a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. Part-time timetables are regularly reviewed and must have a proposed end date, after which the child is expected to attend full-time.

Exceptional circumstances where absence will **not** be granted during term time are as follows:

- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice (1 authorised session is allowed for treatment of headlice)
- Voluntary non-participation in a school trip, visit or event (other arrangements in school will be made)
- Family holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments and restrictions. The DfE does not recognise the need for a holiday as exceptional.
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Family transport problems (e.g. family car unavailable due to unforeseen servicing/repairs)
- School refusal
- Recreational activities
- Short-term illness of a sibling or parent within the household
- Severe weather (in cases of severe weather, the school will determine if it is safe for pupils to attend)

Attendance Coding/Records

Schools must maintain an attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. Attendance codes determine whether a pupil is marked as present or absent. The most common codes used include:

/\ - Present at school (/ - morning session, \ - afternoon session)
L – late arrival before the register is closed (before 9.00am)
U – late arrival after the register has closed (after 9.00am) – this is an unauthorised absence
I – illness
G – unauthorised leave of absence, for example a holiday
O – unauthorised absence
M – for medical appointments that can not be arranged outside of school hours. Evidence must be provided for medical appointments that take place during the school day. We will not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Birchington CE Primary School, parents/carers are required to inform the school office in writing and complete a leavers form. The parent/carer must provide the school with the following information:

- child's name, date of leaving, new home address (if applicable),
- name of new school and address of new school.

This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents/carers keep the school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently Absent (PA) pupils are tracked and monitored daily, weekly and termly. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other agencies and the Local Authorities, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Board are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible.

Annex A:

DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance.

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are. Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should: • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

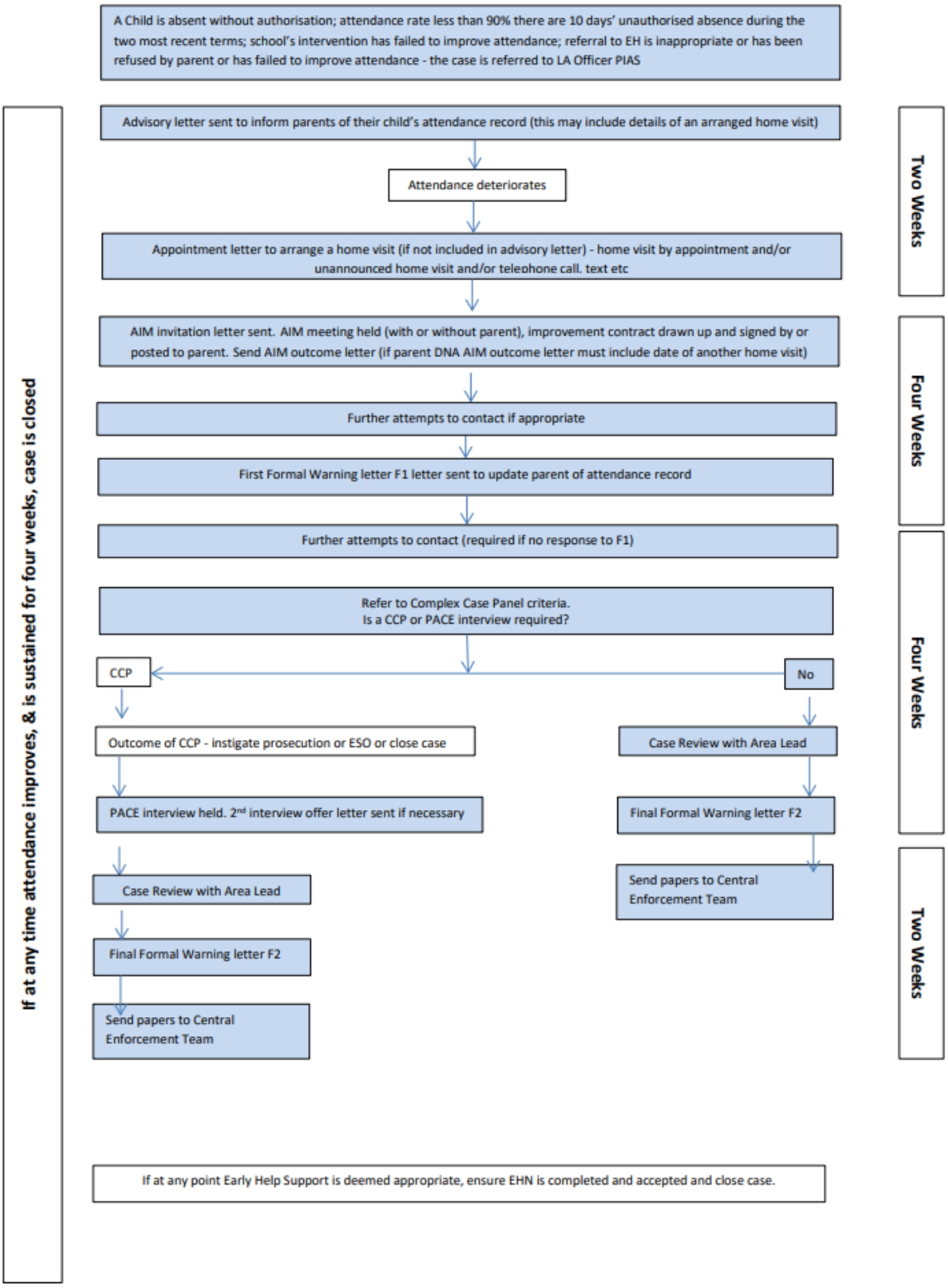
Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance. Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.	Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.	Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care. (LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will: • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school - wherever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance. (If parents feel the school and/or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)	The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures. The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance. Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils. Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction. Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services. Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.

Appendix 1
SCHOOL REFERRAL PATHWAY



Kent County Council Fast Track Case Management Process 12 weeks